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Spearheads bipartisan letter urging support for Land and Water Conservation Fund, cosponsors legislation to preserve open spaces

May 25, 2011

WASHINGTON – Recognizing the significant environmental and economic impact that conservation programs have had and continue to have on New Hampshire, Congressman Charles F. Bass (NH-02) has taken the lead on advocating for sufficient funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and preserving open spaces and farmland.

Bass organized a letter, signed by 150 Republican and Democratic Members, to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies urging the Subcommittee to ensure sufficient funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund during this year's appropriations process. The LWCF is an important conservation program that protects natural resources, increases access to outdoor recreation, and supports our economy and job creation in the tourism and recreation industries.

Bass is also an original cosponsor of bipartisan legislation (the Conservation Easement Incentive Act) to make conservation easement tax deductions permanent, which are set to expire at the end of this year. These conservation easements help to protect open spaces, conserve wildlife habitats, and preserve our nation's natural resources.

Bass said:

"Our state's unique and beautiful natural resources are a treasure to be shared, but we must continue to practice responsible stewardship of these outdoor places. Conservation programs like LWCF, as well as tax incentives like the conservation easement deduction, have allowed states like New Hampshire to preserve these resources for multi-uses and future generations. While Congress has tough decisions to make on funding our nation's priorities, these two important programs help to revitalize our economy and create jobs – a win-win situation for New Hampshire and the nation."

According to the Outdoor Industry Foundation, active outdoor recreation such as hiking, biking, camping, or wildlife viewing supports 53,000 jobs in New Hampshire and produces nearly \$4 billion annually in retail sales and services – a significant impact on our state's economic well-being.

Jane A. Difley, President/Forester with the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, said, "We applaud Congressman Bass for his strong leadership on two of the most important conservation issues facing the current Congress – defending the integrity of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and maintaining tax incentives for private land conservation. Protecting our state's land and water has always been something that all New Hampshire citizens agree on. It is heartening to see Congressman Bass upholding New Hampshire's proud bipartisan tradition of support for conservation."

Ryan Owens, the Executive Director of the Monadnock Conservancy in Keene, said, "We are extremely grateful that Congressman Bass has joined the majority of his colleagues in becoming an original co-sponsor of the Conservation Easement Incentive Act. By ensuring the public benefits of open space through continued private ownership, the conservation easement has been far and away the most effective tool for preserving New Hampshire's priceless rural character and high quality of life. The farms, forests, and waters protected by easements provide not only clean drinking water, wildlife habitat, and diverse recreation opportunities, they also serve as a sustainable supply of food, timber, and wood energy for our communities and local economies."

Susan Arnold, Appalachian Mountain Club Vice President for Conservation, said, "We commend Congressman Bass' leadership in supporting funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a critical program that supports conservation and recreation opportunities in New Hampshire and across the country. AMC appreciates Congressman Bass' support over the years in making sure this funding continues to contribute to New Hampshire's conservation and recreation resources."

Gail Hanson, the Executive Director of the New Hampshire Snowmobile Association, said, "The New Hampshire Snowmobile Association thanks Congressman Bass for his continued support of protecting New Hampshire's natural resources and keeping snowmobiling open and accessible to everyone."

Among the more than 200 organizations supporting Bass' letter are the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Audubon Society of New Hampshire, the Monadnock Conservancy, the National Park Trust, the Northeast Wilderness Trust, the Outdoor Industry Association, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, the Nature Conservancy, the Trust for Public Land, and the Wilderness Society.

A copy of the letter Bass sent to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies on the LWCF can be found here: [Bass LWCF Letter 9-19-11.pdf](#), 935.93 Kb

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